



Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Greater Philadelphia

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July 27, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

The Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Greater Philadelphia (AASC) is a non-profit coalition of over 320 senior clubs and organizations that represent over 120,000 senior citizens in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and is active in ensuring that our members maintain affordable access to utility services, health care, transportation and other services. As a result, AASC strongly urges the FCC not to impose new, hidden "in-state" access charges upon the pre-paid calling card services that millions of senior citizens utilize today.

Senior citizens, particularly those on fixed incomes, require affordable and reliable means of keeping in touch with their families, friends and communities. In addition, pre-paid cards are simple: you pay a flat fee and, based on the per minute rate, know for exactly how many minutes you make calls. Pre-paid calling cards allow seniors on fixed incomes to budget and plan their use of long-distance calls and avoid telephone bill "sticker shock." For these reasons, senior citizens are among the fastest-growing consumers of pre-paid calling cards.

I understand that the FCC is considering imposing new access charges on pre-paid calling card services, and that the fees would be collected by local phone monopolies like Verizon here in Philadelphia. While the corporate giant rakes in additional profit with no additional cost to them, the higher prices could be devastating to seniors, who will either have to increase their monthly outlays for phone cards or substantially trim down their calls to loved ones, doctors, and the like.

At a time when the cost of consumer products are rising, senior citizens should not be asked to take money from their pockets and hand it over to four of the largest companies in America. I strongly urge the FCC not to add new access charges and other fees to paid calling card services. If you do, senior citizens will immediately feel the impact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pedro Rodriguez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Pedro Rodriguez
Executive Director

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator Rick Santorum
Senator Arlen Specter